

HOUSE BILL NO. 667

A BILL FOR AN ACT TITLED: "An act establishing a Lewis and Clark heritage tourism trust fund: transferring \$2 million from the general fund to the Lewis and Clark heritage tourism trust fund; allowing expenditures of interest and other funds in excess of the trust fund principal to promote the historical aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition; requiring equal matching funds for grants; amending section 22-3-1003, MCA; and providing an effective date."

Pompeys Pillar Historical Assn. has spent the last six years raising 1.5 million dollars that went towards the new visitor center, new sidewalks, trails and an amphitheatre. There still are a lot of improvements that need to be made at the Pillar site.

The visitor center was built without a theatre and/or resource room, due to budget cuts, at the time of construction. At the present time there is no room to hold educational classes or any other events or meetings. In order to promote the Pillar site a resource room is a must, to tell the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and their interaction with Montana Indian Tribes, in an educational way.

Our school days education program has been limited due to a lack of sufficient funding, to expand. Resources are not available to expand our school days so more students can participate, due to cutbacks in the primary source of funding.

We have been limited to only four (4) months a year operating, due to budget cuts by the Bureau of Land Management. We have tried to expand our season, for several years, but are still limited to only four months. (Memorial day week-end to the end of September.)

As people are traveling more year around, we are not available to tell the Lewis & Clark story, because we are locked up.

Our annual Clark Days celebration, usually the last weekend in July, programming has been cutback, due to budget cuts, by our partner. We would like to have more participation by the Native Americans and again we are limited due to budget cuts.

We need more and better signage for the Pillar site, along with more trails and pathways to help make our site one of the best in the West. As you know we have the physical evidence to show that the Expedition went thru the Yellowstone River Valley. We want to improve the Pillar site, so it will continue to draw over 50,000 visitors a year.

The other Lewis and Clark sites are all having the same budget shortfalls and therefore are limited in what they can do to promote tourism and Lewis and Clark educational activities. The earnings from this funding source will go a long way in helping fund projects and programs necessary to tell the Lewis and Clark story.

Please approve and continue to carry this bill forward until it is signed by Governor Schweitzer.

Thank you.

Daniel L. Krum, Chairperson
Pompeys Pillar Historical Assn.